

June 20, 2021

Introduce

Good morning Fathom. If we haven't met, my name is Eric Shelly and I'm one of the elders here at the church. Happy Father's Day to all the dads this morning. Thank you for all you do loving and leading your families each day. Hope you have a great day today and feel celebrated and honored.

...

Let's start by praying together...

INTRO

So, I'm not a native of Colorado. Like many current Coloradans, I'm a transplant. I moved out here from Pennsylvania 20 years ago, after I graduated college.

- One of the reasons I moved out here was to ski
- When I was in my early 20s, I did a lot of skiing
- Which means I spent a lot of time on I-70. In ski traffic

Along I-70, they've got these big digital signs with messages on them and I began noticing how traffic always seemed slow down and start backing up right around or before the signs

- And the signs didn't really say anything helpful. It would say something like "Icy Conditions Exist. Drive With Care"
- And I always thought, "Duh... we're in the Rocky Mountains. At 8,000 feet elevation. In January. Of course, icy conditions may exist"
- But it seemed like people would read the signs, start braking hard and it would cause backups
- I would get annoyed at C-DOT... the signs weren't really helpful – they were just stating the obvious. But in stating the obvious the signs caused unnecessary distractions and backups

More recently, C-DOT and transportation agencies in other states have started a sign and billboard campaign to warn people about distracted driving

- They've been putting out a bunch of witty signs to warn people about distracted driving
- "*Hocus Pocus, Drive With Focus*" or "*Texting and Driving Leads to the Dark Side*"
- But similar to the warning signs about winter driving, I question their methods here a bit

- I've always thought it was a bit ironic that they're warning you about distracted driving... with a clever sign that distracts your driving
- Good intentions, but maybe not the best approach

I read a study by AAA¹ which stated that there are 3 main sources of driver distraction:

The first 2 are the obvious ones:

- The first is **visual** - taking your eyes off the road,
- and the second is **manual** - taking your hands off the wheel

Visual and manual distractions are caused by things like:

- Cell phones. They're probably the biggest culprit – texting, looking for directions, using the Fathom app while driving... things like that.
 - *Listen, definitely DO listen to Fathom podcasts in the car... just don't navigate the app while you're driving, Ok?*
- Adjusting the radio or the heat or AC could distract you
- Kids in the backseat can also be a distraction
- Or if you're one of those people that lets your dog ride in your lap while you drive

... there's lots of things that can pull our eyes and our hands away while driving.

But the 3rd source of distraction is a bit harder to study and quantify. This source of distraction is **cognitive**. It's a distraction that takes your mind off of the task.

- Your eyes may be on the road
- And your hands on the wheel
- But if your mind is somewhere else,
- You're still a distracted driver, because your mind is occupied. You're distracted cognitively

Cognitive distraction can play out in several forms including:

- Increased reaction time – you'll be slower to brake or swerve if needed
- Missed cues – you may miss another driver's turn signal or changing traffic lights
- Decreased visual scanning – when thinking hard while driving, you may get tunnel vision and so you miss things going on around you or things in your periphery

Very early on, when Anne and I were dating... I think it was our second date...

- I picked her up and we were driving somewhere for dinner
- And I was so engaged in the conversation, trying to do such a good job of listening to her, and getting to know her... really paying attention to her...

¹ <https://aaafoundation.org/measuring-cognitive-distraction-automobile/>

- That I drove right through a red light!
- Thankfully, it was on somewhat of a side road and not a major intersection,
 - It didn't cause an accident
 - And no one was hurt...
 - but I blew right through it
- I didn't even realize I did it until Anne brought it up sometime later
- Thankfully, she was willing to overlook my distracted driving and go on a 3rd date with me
- So, even talking – good conversation – can be a source of distraction... especially conversation with a beautiful woman
- So, good things can cause distraction

Verses 20-24: Distracted Cities

Distractions are a real issue in our faith as well. And similar to distracted driving, it can come in forms that in and of themselves *may* not be bad

- It's not a bad or dangerous thing to listen to music or a podcast while driving
- It's not dangerous to talk with your kids or parent your kids while you drive – sometimes it's the best time and opportunity to do so
- And it's not dangerous to have good conversation while you drive
- But if it distracts you from the main goal – to get to where you're going safely – then it can be an issue and a bad thing

Similar things can happen in our faith. We can get distracted from things that aren't necessarily bad or sinful... but they can distract us from the main focus: which is Christ

We can be so distracted by so many things, that we miss Jesus entirely!

That's what Jesus is focused on in the first part of this passage. Distraction. And that's what we're going to be talking about today. I'm calling this sermon *Distracted Driving*

Let's turn to our passage today. Please grab your bible or a bible under the chair or a Bible app. We don't really care what form of Bible you use, but we do want you to turn to the passage yourself and read it on your own. We'll be in the book of Matthew, chapter 11. If you're using a bible under your chair, Matthew 11 is on page 816.

As you're turning there, let me briefly set some context for you.

In last week's passage, in Matthew 11, we read the account of some disciples of John the Baptist coming to Jesus

- And they basically asked Jesus on John's behalf, "Are you the guy? Are you the one that John has been talking about all this time?"

- I love Jesus' response to them. He tells them to tell John what they've seen and heard – that Jesus is preaching the good news to the poor, healing the blind, lame, lepers, deaf, and raising the dead.
 - Jesus always wants us to make a decision on our own, for ourselves
 - He knows that is the only way to true belief in Him
- And then Jesus teaches the crowds around him. And He uses John as his teaching topic.
 - Here Jesus essentially says that John is the greatest prophet there is
 - John is a modern-day Elijah
 - But the Jewish people rejected John, just as they're rejecting Jesus
- Then Jesus calls them childlike, saying they are not easily impressed or satisfied
 - Think of the spoiled kid with all the newest and best toys, with video games to play with, an iPad to watch movies, a brand-new bike to ride
 - Yet they come up to their parent and say, "I'm bored"
- They're spoiled! That's how Jesus is describing the crowds
- The generation that Jesus is talking to had both John the Baptist pointing to Jesus, AND they had Jesus walking among them... and they still weren't impressed!
 - They thought they knew better
 - They thought they were wiser and smarter
 - Actually, they sound a lot like our generation today– where everyone thinks they're wiser and ready to critique the smallest slight
- This is who Jesus is speaking to and talking to as we step into our passage today: a spoiled brat of a generation that isn't impressed by anything
- And so, Jesus has some strong, hard words for them
- He's got some woes for them
- Let's start reading in verses 20-24 of Matthew 11. Verse 20:

²⁰ Then he began to denounce the cities where most of his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent. Verse 20 is what I love about Matthew's writing. He clearly summarizes for us what Jesus is saying in verses 20-24.

²¹ "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²² But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. ²³ And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. ²⁴ But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you."

- Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum were all Jewish cities on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee

- Jesus called some of his disciples from these towns, had spent lots of time in these towns, had done many miracles in these towns
- Jesus says “woe is you” to Chorazin and Bethsaida because they had the Messiah walking their streets, preaching the good news, and performing miracles... but they missed him and refused to repent
- But Jesus says that Tyre and Sidon, these pagan, Gentile cities 35 and 60 miles away from the Sea of Galilee² have a better chance to repent and believe than these Jewish cities
- Then there is Capernaum. Jesus saves some specific grievances for Capernaum
 - You see, Capernaum was like Jesus’ home base for his ministry
 - Of the 10 miracles Matthew talks about in chapters 8 and 9, half were done in Capernaum!
 - Capernaum had so much opportunity to witness Jesus, turn from its sin and repent. But it hadn’t
- So, Jesus saves an extra strong woe for Capernaum. He contrasts them against the most notoriously sinful city in the OT – Sodom
- Sodom was ‘sin city’ in the Old Testament. It was so wicked that God destroyed it with fire
- Jesus says that if he performed the same mighty works in Sodom that he did in Capernaum, that Sodom would have repented and not been destroyed!

Explain: Distraction Leads to Unrepentance

I think there’s something important here for us. I missed it the first few times I read this passage:

- Jesus is distinguishing between two types of cities: repentant cities and unrepentant cities
- He isn’t distinguishing between Jewish and Gentile cities and he’s not distinguishing between sinful and non-sinful cities, or levels of sin – because all cities are sinful!
- Rather he’s pointing out that some cities would repent and turn from their sin and others would not
- The cities he says would be repentant are Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom. We’ll call these the sin cities
- The cities he says are unrepentant are Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. We’ll call these the unrepentant cities

² Barbieri, L. A., Jr. (1985). [Matthew](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 44). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

What Jesus is saying here is that the unrepentant cities have the greater sin and the greater woe... because they are unrepentant

- The woe to the unrepentant cities is greater than to the sin cities
- Even though the sin cities are living in idolatry, prostitution, luxury and greed, self-indulgence, drunkenness, sexual immorality...
- Jesus is saying that those sin cities – the ones indulging in all that sin – he’s saying “if I preached there, they would repent of their sin and all the moral wrong they’ve done.”
- “But you Jewish cities... you’re too distracted to even repent. You may be living a moral, Jewish life... checking all the religious boxes... but you’re unrepentant”
- And that’s the bigger issue in Jesus’ eyes

That’s the gospel idea here for us church. It’s the idea that **repentance from our sin is more important than our sin**

- Jesus doesn’t seem to care how sinful the city is or was, but rather how repentant the city is and will be
- In our terms,
 - It doesn’t matter what your sin is or was
 - Or what stigma society may place on the sin
 - All sin separates us from God, no matter what it is
 - What matters is if you repent of your sin, if you turn away from it
- Now, ‘to repent’ means ‘to turn away’, so ultimately you won’t do those things any longer – you’ll be working to turn from your sin
- **But it is still better to have lived in sin city and repent, than to live a religiously good life, but live it in distracted unrepentance**

Christians, this should get our attention. Because we are the ones Christ is talking to here. We are the ones who may be too distracted with being Christian to repent of our sins

- Jesus doesn’t address what the sins of these sin cities are. We know from commentators and other historical accounts
- But Jesus doesn’t speak to them here. I think that’s intentional, because it doesn’t really matter
- What matters is that Jesus knows their hearts and knows that if the gospel was preached in those cities, they *would have repented* of their sins, whatever the sins were
- And he knows the unrepentant hearts of the unrepentant cities. He knows they are busy
 - going to the temple and worshipping,
 - tithing,

- offering sacrifices
- keeping the Sabbath,
- keeping all of their religious customs and rituals,
- and all the while missing Jesus and missing the chance at repentance
- They're too busy and distracted with being religious to be repentant

Explain: Our Distractions

- So, in this section, Jesus is calling us away from whatever it is that has been distracting us
 - Maybe like the Jews Jesus is talking to, we're distracted from religious rules and legalism
 - Maybe you grew up in church where religion or faith is more about following rules than following Jesus
 - Maybe you grew up in a church where your faith was entirely about how you acted or what you did, and not about who you believe in
 - Maybe you're just like the Jews of Jesus' day and you need to hear that Jesus has a better way for you
 - That HE is more important than what you do or what you have done to try and please God
 - Maybe your distraction comes from sin
 - Not the type of sin where you slip up once and do something wrong or sinful
 - But the type of sin that's become a lifestyle
 - Who you're living with
 - Who you're sleeping with
 - What you eat or drink or smoke
 - What you watch on TV
 - How you handle money
 - How you treat the poor, or the widow next door, or your gay co-worker
 - An ongoing lifestyle involving sin can so easily distract us
 - Maybe the distraction is your job or your career
 - And that's the thing you're focused on at all costs
 - Trying to get ahead, or get that next promotion, or raise
 - Or making enough money to where you're finally feel content and secure
 - And you're so focused on that, that it distracts you from everything else

- Maybe the distraction is who you're dating
 - Dating the right person – someone you could eventually marry – gets your time and focus and energy
- Maybe the distraction is your family – raising your kids
 - Raising good and healthy and well-rounded kids is the most important thing to you right now
 - And that comes at the expense of everything else
 - Or your marriage, your spouse is the most important thing to you right now and they get all of your focus
- Distractions can come from lots of places – not just religion or religious legalism
 - And a lot of those places aren't necessarily bad in and of themselves
 - Church and jobs and kids and spouses are all good things
- But if they are THE things or THE ONLY things...
- And if they get in the way of us seeing Jesus and coming to Him in repentance...
- They can be a distraction... just as deadly as sending that text message while driving
- When I called this sermon "Distracted Driving", these are the types of distractions I was thinking of and referring to
 - They're the things in life that we put in front of Jesus, or ahead of Jesus
 - They're the things in life that take our eyes or our minds or our focus off of Jesus
 - Sometimes we call them idols, sometimes it's called legalism, or works, or lots of other terms that are all getting at the same thing
 - We get distracted by them and do not focus on Jesus

Let's keep moving through our passage

Verses 25-27: Three Concepts

After talking about these cities, Jesus prays. In verse 25, we read:

²⁵ At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; ²⁶ yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. ²⁷ All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

Jesus prays to his father here. This is a prayer of thanks, but it's also a prayer of theological teaching. Jesus prayed this in the presence of the disciples... so he wanted them to hear this also.

There's so much in verses 25-27 that I could probably preach a full sermon on these 3 verses alone. But we're looking to cover a larger passage than that today, so I'm just going to pull out 3 key points for you.

The first appears in verse 26. The main point here is that **it's God's will and sovereignty that decides who is saved**

- In other words, it's not the words of the preacher, or the evangelist, or what you do or don't say to your neighbor that results in someone accepting Christ
 - It's God's gracious will, revealed through his Son
 - Only through God's will does someone come to know God

This echoes what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1:21, which reads: **SLIDE For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.**

People are saved because of God's will alone, not anything that I or pastor Chris, or Matt Chandler, or Tim Keller, or anyone else says. God's will alone determines this.

The second point here is from verse 27 which tells us that **As God's equal, it is Jesus who reveals God to man**

- The Father and Son are mutually and exclusively known to each other³
- And so similar to our first statement, if the Father does not choose... and the Son does not reveal the Father... there will be no salvation for the sinner
- Jesus has all authority to reveal God to us

At the end of Matthew, in the great Commission, Jesus affirms this when he says **SLIDE "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.** Matt 28:18

It is Jesus who has the authority to reveal God to man.

Again, these are both some big, high-level theological concepts. I don't have the time to fully unpack them today.

Explain: The Children, Not the Wise

But I do want to focus on a third concept that Jesus prays in this section. In verse 25, Jesus says, 'thank you **that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children**'

- In other words, Jesus says, it's not the wise, educated, or religious that the Son will reveal the Father to
- They are too busy being wise, educated, and religious to even notice. They are too distracted
- The Son will reveal the Father to those who are like children. To those who approach their faith like children

³ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). [*Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*](#) (Vol. 2, p. 39). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Illustrate: Childlike Focus

I think too often, kids get a bad rap for having short attention spans.

- It's certainly true – kids do have very short attention spans
 - When my 8 and 10 year old daughters are playing, they will jump from one thing to the next
 - They'll start the morning doing some type of craft... and while doing that, they'll get the thought to build something with Legos
 - So, they'll get out the Legos. And as they're playing Legos, they'll decide to build something from Legos for their dolls
 - Which leads them to pull out all their doll clothes and accessories
 - And so, they'll start playing dolls
 - And they'll play that they're taking their dolls to the park, so they go outside with their dolls
 - And then its lunch time and so they'll drop everything and go eat
 - But by then, there's paper, markers, Legos, and dolls and doll clothes spread throughout our entire basement, house, and backyard
 - And that's when Anne and I usually yell at them and make them clean up!
- So, kids certainly have short attention spans
- But here's what I've also noticed about kids. When they are focused on something, it gets 100% of their attention
- They are completely focused on it. They're all in
- They don't get distracted like adults do. They don't multi-task
- It may not be for very long, but kids go all in on whatever they're doing or learning
- Back in May, my 10-year-old daughter Kaelyn was learning about electricity in 4th grade... and she was telling me what she learned
- She excitedly told me
 - Daddy, we watched this video in science about electricity
 - And a scientist had an electric eel in a tank
 - And he took a fake human arm with lightbulbs in it
 - And stuck it in the tank for the eel to bite
 - When the eel bit it, the electricity in the eel's bite moved through the fake arm and made the lightbulbs light up!
- I was listening to this and had several thoughts:
 - First, how cool is God's creation that electric eels exist and somehow have electricity generated in and coursing through their bodies!
 - Second, who is this mad scientist that is training electric eels to attack humans?!

- Why did it have to be a human arm with light bulbs in it?
- Couldn't it have been a fake fish? Or just some kind of science tube or something? Why a fake human arm?
 - This scientist is sketchy
- But third, it made me smile at how this video and lesson on electricity had captured my child's attention, curiosity, focus, and excitement
 - She was all in - completely focused – on learning about this and she was all in on telling me about it
 - That's how kids learn and how they approach things
- We, as adults don't operate this way. We're distracted
 - I might be talking with Anne about something, but my mind is still on what happened at work that day
 - I might be listening to my daughter tell me about electric eels being trained to attack humans, but I'm also checking the score of a baseball game on my phone or shopping on Amazon
 - I might be driving, but I'm also bringing up my favorite playlist or looking at a text message that I just received
- Adults are wiser, have longer attention spans, and have greater understanding, but we're also more easily distracted. **We need to focus like little children focus**
- **Otherwise, we're in danger of missing Jesus**

But as distracted adults, how do we focus? How do we put our energy and focus on Jesus like a child would?

That's what the remainder of our passage is about.

Verses 28-30: Come, Take, Learn

In verses 28-30, Jesus tells us how to focus on Him. Let's read those together. Verse 28

²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

So, these verses are ones you may have heard before if you've spent time around Christians or around the church.

- They're popular verses
- If you go to Hobby Lobby or Christian bookstores, you'll probably see them in some type of art or picture to hang on your wall

They're popular verses because they are comforting. "Come to me", "I will give you rest", "I am gentle and lowly in heart", "Find rest for your souls", "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light"

Explain: Yoke and Work

These are all very comforting, reassuring phrases, right? They definitely are.

- Except for this one word that appears in there twice. “Yoke”
- This isn’t referring to the yellow, center of an egg
- And it doesn’t refer to what happens when you work out a lot
- Those are spelled y-o-l-k
- We’re talking about a different kind of yoke – a farming, agricultural tool called a yoke. Y-o-k-e
- Yokes are used to pair 2 oxen together while plowing or pulling something **SLIDE**
 - It allows the farmer to steer them both together at the same time
 - It keeps them pointed in the same direction
 - It allows the 2 oxen to share a load together
 - I read that 1 ox by itself can pull its own body weight...
 - But 2 oxen together can pull 3x their total weight!

So, in verses 28-30, Jesus is speaking about rest. But it’s not the type of rest we often think of.

- I’ve heard many pastors use this verse to teach about sabbath and slowing down...
 - and those are very important things for Christians to learn
 - It is important to keep a rhythm of rest and of sabbath in our lives
- But I don’t think sabbath rest is what Jesus is talking about here
- Jesus isn’t speaking about the once-a-week sabbath rest from our work or our jobs
- And he’s not talking about the vacation type of rest, where we’re sitting on a beach with our toes in the water and a frozen drink in our hand – although that does sound great and restful!
- Jesus mentions a yoke. If he was talking about rest, relaxation, sabbath, and unwinding, He wouldn’t talk about a yoke at all
- A yoke is a tool for work and the Bible clearly explains that humans were created to work – we were not created to rest, but to work
 - Otherwise, the pattern in Genesis would not have been ‘**God rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.**’
 - Six days of work... the seventh is a day of rest
 - It’s not the other way around
- So, Jesus is instructing us here NOT in how to rest, but in how to work. In how to live, in how to operate on a daily basis

- He's not saying "Hey you who are burdened and who labor and are heavy laden... You really shouldn't work so hard. You need a vacation and some rest."
- No – He's saying "You who are burdened, come to me, **pair yourself with me as you work**. Learn from me, and it will go better and easier than what you were trying before."
- Jesus gives us three instructions or commands here. He gives us three ways to overcome distraction and focus on Him... like a child would
- Let's look at each of them

Come to Me

The first command is in verse 28. He says "Come". **SLIDE** "Come to me." ²⁸ **Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.**

Remember, Jesus is speaking to a people who are burdened down and distracted by religion, and by the religious and legalistic traditions the Pharisees had imposed on them

- Jesus is calling people away from religious legalism and distraction and calling people to himself
- He's saying, I know you've been working really hard to keep all of those laws and requirements. I know it has you distracted and burdened
- **Come to me** instead. Just come
- The thing about a yoke is that it only works if the two oxen are near to one another and facing the same direction
 - So, Jesus is calling us to come near to him
 - To stand next to him, spend time with him
 - To walk alongside of him
 - Walk in the same direction he is going
 - He says "Come to me."
- **Jesus asks for our focus to be on Him**. That's His simple command. "Come"

Take My Yoke

Next, in verse 29, Jesus' second command to us is to "**Take my yoke upon you**" **SLIDE**

First, he tells us to come to him. But here he tells us to **take my yoke**. This is a deeper experience.⁴ And it's a harder experience

⁴ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [*The Bible exposition commentary*](#) (Vol. 1, p. 41). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

- It's harder because it involves submission
 - Even if we come to the point where we want to take on Christ's yoke
 - We may realize it is the best thing for us
 - That walking with Jesus, yoked and tethered to him
 - Is the best place for us to be... it is still hard
- Submission is hard
- And putting on a yoke requires submission

Illustrate: Jonah Dog Collar

- This makes me think of our dog, Jonah... I've talked about him before in sermons
- Jonah is a 2-year-old black lab
- He weighs about 90 pounds
- And as a 2-year-old, he's still very much a puppy, which means that walking him can be an adventure sometimes
 - Depending on what other people or dogs or other animals you encounter on your walk
 - Puppies want to check things out – especially lab puppies – they want to check out everything
 - And they get very excited about things they see and encounter – all things
- So, if you're walking Jonah and he gets excited and decides he's going to pull to check something out... there's a good chance he's pulling you
 - He weighs 90 pounds, and it's mostly muscle
- But the solution that we've found to his strong pulling is a pinch collar
- This is one of those collars with some prongs on them, that pinch on the dog's neck when they pull
 - It doesn't choke him, but it pinches the dog's neck
 - causes some discomfort for them
 - and so, they don't pull as hard or at all
- Now Jonah loves going for walks with us
 - In the mornings, he runs to the door, tail wagging... he's ready to go each day
- But each day, to start our walk, I need to put his collar on him
 - And he doesn't like this
 - He sees me grab the collar and turn to put it over his head and he pulls away
 - He fights the collar
 - You'd think he'd realize that the collar is a good thing because it allows him to go on a walk

- You'd think he'd just submit, lower his head, take the collar, and go on his walk... but he doesn't
- I need to trick him with a treat in order to get the collar on him
- Even though it's in his best interest to do so, he fights submitting
 - Even though taking the collar upon himself means he gets to go on a walk
 - Which gives him exercise
 - And time with his master
 - And he gets to play and sniff and explore...
 - Despite getting to do all that, he fights it
 - Submitting is hard
 - Even though it's good for him
- We're not all that different from Jonah when it comes to submission, are we?
 - Even though taking on Christ's yoke means
 - We get to walk with our master
 - And we get to walk closely with Him
 - It requires submission
 - And so, we fight it
 - Even though it's good for us
- **But Jesus asks for our submission.** He asks us to take his yoke on

Learn From Me

The third command Jesus gives is later in verse 29. He says to, "**29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me**". The third command is to *learn from Jesus*. **SLIDE**

Jesus tells us to first come to him, and then to take his yoke, and finally to learn from him. This is a continuation of the yoke illustration

- I mentioned earlier that farmers would use a yoke to link two oxen together because together they could pull more weight than they could individually
- But another way that farmers used a yoke was to teach or train a younger ox
- A yoke allowed a farmer to place a weaker or younger ox alongside of a stronger one
 - The stronger or older ox would help train the younger to carry a greater load in the future
 - The stronger ox would carry or pull most of the load until the weaker ox learns to pull its own weight
 - But all the while, the weaker ox would walk alongside of the stronger one and learn from it
 - It would learn how to wear the yoke

- How to pull the load
 - How to walk in the straight path where the farmer wants it to go
 - The younger or weaker ox would learn from the older, stronger, wiser ox how to work
 - How to do what it was created to do
- That's the concept Jesus is teaching here – He says take my yoke upon you and learn from me
 - Jesus knows that it's not enough for him to give us a command and expect us to get it or learn it
 - He knows that we need to walk with him...
 - Walk alongside of him,
 - observe him,
 - listen to him
 - So that we can learn from him
 - So that we can learn how to do what we were created to do
- This is the key to overcoming the distractions and the burdens that we face
 - **On a daily basis we are to walk with Jesus and learn from him**
 - In scripture
 - In prayer
 - In meditation
 - In worship and adoration
 - In discipleship with other believers
 - Which is why regular church attendance is important
 - And D-groups are so important
 - And why practicing the spiritual disciplines are so important
- We'll face all kinds of distractions and burdens in life
 - Whether they are the religious distractions like the Jews faced in Jesus' day
 - Or whether they are the many other distractions that life throws at us...
 - Distractions and burdens will come
- Distractions and burdens will keep us from doing what we were created to do – they'll keep us from our work
 - Unless we come to Jesus
 - And take his yoke
 - And learn from him

Illustration: Sky Diving

In my sermon prep, I thought about a way to illustrate this. And here's how I thought it might make sense.

This fall, Anne and I will celebrate our 15th wedding anniversary. We got married in October of 2006 here in Colorado.

As we got closer to our wedding day, my buddies and groomsmen wanted to do something with me to celebrate. They wanted to throw me some sort of bachelor party.

But, the stereotypical, secular type of bachelor party wasn't an option for me. There's lots of things wrong with the world's idea of a bachelor party. But I had friends flying out to Colorado from all over the country and so I did want to do something to celebrate with them.

So, I figured what better way to prepare for marriage... what better way to spend my last day as a single man... then to jump out of a perfectly good airplane!

- For my bachelor party, we went skydiving
- (After the service, you can ask Anne for her thoughts on this idea at the time)
- So, the day before my wedding, me and a handful of buddies...
- Drove up to Longmont
- Put on harnesses and goggles
- Flew in a small airplane up to about 18,000'
- And jumped out!

I'm sure many of you are picturing Patrick Swayze and Keanu Reeves in *Point Break* right now. Admit it... You're thinking about Bohdi and Johnny Utah right now!

The skydiving scene from *Point Break* is not what my sky diving experience was like.

- Don't get me wrong...My jump was awesome
- and I would do it again... maybe to celebrate our 15th anniversary!?
- But the jump wasn't like the scene in *Point Break*
- My buddies and I didn't just go up in a plane on our own and jump out by ourselves
 - We weren't doing acrobatics in the air
 - Or joining hands together
 - And we didn't land in a lake
 - None of that
- They don't let you jump by yourself. You need to go with an instructor – it's called a tandem jump
 - In a tandem jump, the instructor is attached to you – you're both wearing harnesses and you're tethered together with carabiners and straps
 - The instructor is strapped directly behind you and they jump with you – you jump together at the same time
- The instructor has several roles

- The first is to get you to jump
 - Because sky diving kind of feels real when
 - You pull up to the airport
 - you're on the ground going over the instructions
 - and when you put the harness on
 - Then it really starts to feel real when
 - You board the plane
 - and the plane takes off
 - and climbs and climbs
 - But at some point, they open the door and you're standing there looking out over Longmont
 - And you know that you've got to jump!
 - When that door opens, that's when the whole thing really feels real!
 - Now, it was my bachelor party and so I got to jump first
 - And I didn't want to be a wimp in front of my friends...
 - So, I pumped myself up and was like "let's go, let's do this!"
 - And I jumped pretty quickly
 - But my buddy RJ... he needed some more coaxing... he needed the instructor to get him to jump!
 - So, the first thing the instructor needs to do is get the jumper to jump
- Now, after you jump out of the plane, you free fall for a while
 - Which is the wildest, coolest part of the entire thing
 - You've just jumped out of an airplane and you begin hurtling towards the earth
 - It's terrifying and exhilarating at the same time
 - Its why you skydive... it's what gives you the rush
 - You're flying through the air... intense wind in your face
 - You look around and you see clouds... and your buddies who jumped out after you
 - And you remember that I JUST JUMPED OUT OF AN AIRPLANE!!!
 - So, all of this is going through your mind... but meanwhile, the instructor is there, strapped to you
 - And they've got an altimeter on their wrist

- And they need to make sure that amidst all the distraction, all the fear, all the excitement, all the things to look at and think about, all the exhilaration...
 - Amidst all that, their job is to make sure that you pull the chord
 - That's a pretty important part. Pulling the chord opens the parachute... which prevents you from reaching terminal velocity and slamming into the ground and dying
 - The instructor's most important job is to make sure that you pull the chord and make sure you pull it at the right time
 - Most first-time jumpers would be too distracted to do it right
 - So, at just the right time, they yell in your ear "PULL"
 - And you pull the handle to the chord on your parachute harness
 - And the parachute opens
 - And your free fall stops
 - You're still falling, but not at the insane speed you were falling at before – it's a slower, more controlled descent
 - This is also a fun part of the jump... because you realize that you aren't going to slam into the earth at 120 miles per hour
 - And here you get to look around even more and enjoy the view and enjoy the descent and enjoy what you've just done
- But the instructor's job isn't over
- Because all the while that you're falling, the instructor is steering you – so that you don't just land anywhere – but so that you land back at the airport where you took off from
 - They're steering you and guiding you
 - All the while as the ground is getting closer and closer
 - As you approach the landing field – which is just a big space of gravel and sand to land on
- And as you get ready to land, the instructor gives you instructions to land
 - Telling you how to lift your feet
 - and bend your knees
 - and how to land safely
- And so, you go through this entire experience
 - With this instructor tethered to you
 - Helping you
 - Teaching you
 - Guiding you

- Through the fear and excitement
- Past the things to look at and distract you
- And free fall and smooth sailing and landing
- The instructor is there with you
- You can see the parallel that I'm making here, right?

Conclusion

- Sure, it would be a blast of freedom to just pack your own parachute and put it on and jump out of a plane yourself
 - The freedom in that would be incredible. At first.
 - Until you get distracted. Or forget something. Or do something wrong. Or make a mistake
- Just like a first-time sky diver goes to an instructor to help them jump out of an airplane – we can go to Jesus. After all, Jesus is calling *us*
 - To come to him
 - To attach ourselves and our lives to him
 - To learn from him as he guides us, and instructs us, and steers us, and helps us
 - Through the fear and the excitement and the turbulence and the work
 - Through it all
- It's not a walk on the beach – Jesus tells us that it's still going to be work
- But when we're yoked to him, when we're tethered to him...
 - When we've submitted to him...
 - We're not giving up freedom. Not at all
- Rather, He's there to help pull the weight, to bear the burden, and to teach us
- Jesus tells us "Come to me". "Take my yoke". "Learn from me"
- And my hope and prayer this morning is that you'll listen to him, that you'll respond
- That you'll submit to him and put aside your desire to go your own way, to think you've found freedom
- Only to find more distraction and more to weigh you down and burden you
- Instead, listen to him. Respond to him
- Jesus is calling us – the weary, burdened, heavy laden people that we are
- Whether you're
 - a longtime Christian who's been distracted by being Christian
 - or you're not yet a Christian, but you've been distracted by all that life throws at you
- Jesus is calling us to something better in him

- To true freedom
- To a life free of religious burdens and distractions
- To a life of learning from our savior
- To a walk that is easy and gentle and restful
- Because it's a walk alongside of Christ

Let's pray.

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

The **first** is Communion –The crackers and juice represent Christ's body broken and his blood shed on the cross for those who proclaim Christ as Lord and Savior.

The **second** way we respond is by Giving – We believe in giving to God our tithes and offerings – our first and our best – because in Jesus, God gave us His first and His best.
fathomchurch.org/give

The **third** is Prayer –Right now if you're in need of prayer or would like someone to pray for you, go to **fathomchurch.org/pray**

The **fourth** response is Singing – Singing moves what we've heard in God's Word from our heads to our hearts.

So, I'm going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we'll take communion, and then we'll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 –WORDS OF INSTITUTION

²³For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." **TAKE**

²⁵In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." **TAKE**

²⁶For as often as you eat this bread ²⁶and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Thanks church. Love you guys. Let's sing together.